

# **General Troy H. Middleton: Steadfast in Command**

**A Monograph  
by  
LTC Patrick N. Kaune  
United States Army**



**School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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## **MONOGRAPH APPROVAL**

**LTC Patrick N. Kaune**

General Troy H. Middleton: Steadfast in Command  
Approved by:

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Stephen A. Bourque, Ph.D.

Monograph Director

---

Clifford Weinstein, Lt Col, USMC

Second Reader

---

Wayne W. Grigsby, COL, IN

Director,  
School of Advanced  
Military Studies

---

Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

Director,  
Graduate Degree  
Programs

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## **Abstract**

GENERAL TROY H. MIDDLETON: STEADFAST IN COMMAND by LTC Patrick N. Kaune, United States Army, 56 pages.

Lieutenant General Troy H. Middleton effectively commanded division and corps formations in World War II. His previous combat experience included command of the 47<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in World War I. During the interwar period, Middleton served as an instructor at the Infantry School, Command and General Staff Course, and the Army War College. This monograph examines those factors that influenced Middleton. Command at division and corps on the World War II battlefield required experience and judgment to develop sound decisions in the stressful environment of combat. General Middleton's attendance at the service schools and prior experiences in combat affected his command. He employed the cognitive model of the estimate for processing information rapidly and logically thinking through tactical problems. Middleton demonstrated an ability to remain calm in developing plans of action under the most trying of combat conditions. Lastly, Middleton's interwar education and combat experience enabled him to diverge from conventional approaches to solve tactical problems.

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## Introduction

Major General Troy H. Middleton recognized the threat to the American VI Corps' beachhead at Salerno. Elements of the 16th and 29th Panzer blocked the 179th Regiment's attempt to gain the high ground near Paestum. The enemy enjoyed "every advantage of observation, including numerous agents in and near the Division's lines, whereas the landing troops were forced to rely on aerial observation from cub planes."<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the German artillery and air created mounting casualties for Middleton's 45th Division. The 179th advanced northward in two columns and encountered stiff resistance as it attempted to cross the Sele River. Shortly, thereafter, the 16th Panzer Division counterattacked to seize the high ground around Persano to prevent reinforcement of the 179th.<sup>2</sup> Fifth Army commander, Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark recounted, "The two fingers which the Forty-Fifth Division had stuck out toward the Ponte Sele were badly bruised, and it appeared they might be cut off."<sup>3</sup> Unable to evacuate the dying wounded, the 179th fixed bayonets in anticipation of German assaults on September 12, 1943. Middleton estimated his situation by identifying the critical factors that influenced the tenuous beachhead. He knew his 180th Regiment remained as the Fifth Army Reserve, not scheduled to arrive for two days. Middleton also realized German efforts to penetrate his line of defense "would cut the beachhead forces in two and split the sector down the center."<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, Middleton positioned his units to save the regiment and preserve the American VI Corps' beachhead. He ordered the 157th Infantry, 191st Tank Battalion, and 645th Tank

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<sup>1</sup> Leo V. Bishop, Frank J. Glasgow and George A. Fisher, *The Fighting Forty-Fifth the Combat Report of an Infantry Division* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Army & Navy Publishing Company, 1946), 43.

<sup>2</sup> Flint Whitlock, *The Rock of Anzio*. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978), 85.

<sup>3</sup> Mark W Clark, *Calculated Risk*. (New York: Harper Publishing, 1950), 197.

<sup>4</sup> Bishop, Glasgow and Fisher, *The Fighting Forty-Fifth the Combat Report of an Infantry Division*, 46.

Destroyer Battalion “to come with all speed to the regiment’s assistance”.<sup>5</sup> The division commander soon left his command post to observe the situation on the ground. En route, he discovered a motorized artillery battalion displacing to the rear. Middleton ordered the unit’s commander to halt and immediately establish firing positions to strike the German forces attacking the 179th.<sup>6</sup> Though the immediate danger to the regiment subsided, German efforts again intensified on September 13, 1943. The 74th and 64th Panzer Grenadier Regiments attacked against the 45th’s line of defense. General Clark conferred with his subordinate commanders about the possibility of evacuating the American VI and British X Corps.<sup>7</sup> Middleton, opposed to the idea, spat, and told Clark, “I don’t want to tell you how to run your job, but give me support...I want to stay here and fight.”<sup>8</sup> He returned to his headquarters intent on denying the German counterattack access to Highway 18 and Paestum. The Thunderbird commander committed all six of his fighting battalions to accomplish the task. The 45th history recorded, “The shifting and adjusting of troops were a means to gain the maximum effort of the battered and tired men who had been under constant pounding of shell and bomb four days.”<sup>9</sup> Ever cognizant of getting maximum effort from his men and resources, Middleton rejected the “Leavenworth solution” of planning for a withdrawal. Instead, he informed his staff and subordinate units, “this was a good time to do some hard fighting.”<sup>10</sup> He issued an order to “Put

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>6</sup> Frank J. Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1974), 165.

<sup>7</sup> Eric Morris, *Salerno A Military Fiasco* (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1983), 250.

<sup>8</sup> Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007), 226.

<sup>9</sup> Bishop, Glasgow and Fisher, *The Fighting Forty-Fifth the Combat Report of an Infantry Division*, 48.

<sup>10</sup> Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 165.



food and ammunition behind the 45th. We are going to stay here!”<sup>11</sup> The 45th Division held its defensive line and protected the beachhead at Salerno.

Middleton’s performance at Salerno demonstrated the importance of the commander in combat on the battlefields of World War II. Army manuals such as *The Field Service Regulations, United States Army 1923* mandated, “Whether the exercise of the function of command be complex or simple, the commander must be the controlling head...and from him must flow the energy and the impulse which are to animate all under him.”<sup>12</sup> Successive army documents stressed sound decision making on the battlefield and accountability for those decisions.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, emerging doctrine emphasized necessity of making sound, rapid decisions in a battlefield full of uncertainty and unanticipated events.<sup>14</sup> Historian Hanson Baldwin captured the influences on future commanders in his biography of the 4th Armored Division Commander, General John S. Wood: “Whatever the division commander does, how his division performs, affects – and may indeed, determine – the fate of not only the division itself, but of the Corps and the Army.”<sup>15</sup> Others such as Martin van Creveld, focused not on command’s responsibilities but rather its functions.<sup>16</sup> He recognized it as a process including the gathering and processing of information, estimating the situation, and deciding upon action that results in detailed planning and execution.<sup>17</sup> Simply put, command entailed a cognitive method by which

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<sup>11</sup> Bishop, Glasgow and Fisher, *The Fighting Forty-Fifth the Combat Report of an Infantry Division*, 48.

<sup>12</sup> United States War Department, *Field Service Regulations United States Army 1923* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office), 4.

<sup>13</sup> United States War Department, *FM 100-5 Field Service Regulations United States Army 1941* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office), 23-24.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Hanson W. Baldwin, *Tiger Jack* (Fort Collins, Colorado: The Old Army Press, 1979), 17.

<sup>16</sup> Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1985), 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

the commander processed information while formulating a decision for action in the control of his unit.

Previous studies of successful commanders focused on the attributes of the individual. For example, Robert H. Berlin's composite biography captured the commonalities associated with the students attending Command and General Staff School (CGSS) throughout the interwar period. Berlin's work characterized the shared characteristics of the future corps commanders.<sup>18</sup> He concluded, "Their professional education and extensive experience as instructors, commanders, and staff officers made them ready for high-level command as the nation prepared to deploy large ground combat forces... They had extensive education and experience and an aptitude for tactical thought."<sup>19</sup> Senior leaders such as Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall determined such men should have demonstrated the necessary "leadership, force, and vigor" required for command.<sup>20</sup> Berlin's work focused primarily on promotion and the selection for corps command. Although Berlin's survey proved beneficial in the identification of collective characteristics, his work certainly did not explore the specific factors that affect an individual's approach to command.

As witnessed in his actions at Salerno, General Middleton distinguished himself at every level of command during his career. Middleton twice earned the Distinguished Service Medal for brilliant leadership and personal gallantry as a battalion and regimental commander in World War I.<sup>21</sup> He commanded formations to take objectives in the Bois des Ogons, and the Bois de Foret

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<sup>18</sup> Robert H Berlin, *U.S. Army World War II Corps Commanders: A Composite Biography* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1989), 14.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Marshall to Major General Walter S. Grant, 7 July, 1941 in *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall Volume: We Cannot Delay July 1, 1939-December 6, 1941*, ed. Larry Bland, Sharon Ritenour and Lawrence E. Wunderlin Jr., vol. 2 of *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 561.

<sup>21</sup> Pollard and Middleton, *The Forty-Seventh Infantry: A History 1917-1919*, 112.

after numerous unsuccessful attempts by other units.<sup>22</sup> Middleton became a Lieutenant Colonel on September 17, 1918 just prior to the commencement of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. Middleton's battalion led the 47th Regiment's attack on September 26, 1918. Middleton briefly served as commander of the 39th Regiment on October 11, due to extensive casualties following a German gas attack. He then commanded the 47th Regiment in leading the advance of the 4th Infantry Division to the Meuse River.<sup>23</sup> Middleton's exceptional battlefield performance made him the youngest Colonel in the American Expeditionary Forces on October 14, 1918. Upon his redeployment from France, the Army administratively reduced him to the rank of Major. Middleton served the next ten years as both student and instructor at the Infantry School, Command and General Staff School (CGSS), and the Army War College.<sup>24</sup> Following graduation from the War College, he served as an ROTC instructor at Louisiana State University from 1930 to 1936. Middleton again attained the rank of Lieutenant Colonel before he opted for retirement on October 31, 1937, having completed his tour as an Inspector General in the Philippines. However, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he volunteered for active service. General Marshall recognized his excellent record in combat and the Army soon advanced him to the rank of Major General and assigned him to command the 45th Infantry Division in June 1942. He commanded operations in Sicily, July 1943 and in Italy, September 1943. Middleton's chronic football injury to his left knee forced him to relinquish command of the 45th Infantry division on November 19, 1943. Cleared medically stateside, Generals George C. Marshall and Dwight D. Eisenhower brought him back to Europe to command the newly formed VIII Corps on March 4, 1944. Middleton commanded the VIII Corps through critical campaigns including the breakout of Normandy, Operation Cobra, clearance of the Brittany peninsula, and the defense of the Ardennes

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 1-70. Price's work, considered the definitive biography of General Middleton contains the information found in this paragraph.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 70-139.

at the Battle of the Bulge. Middleton relinquished command of VIII Corps on May 18, 1945 and retired at the rank of Lieutenant General. Middleton returned to Baton Rouge, where he served as the President of LSU from 1950 to 1962.<sup>25</sup>

Though history recorded his numerous accomplishments, few if any works examine the factors that influenced Middleton's command of large unit formations at the division and corps level. Writing on the value of military education, author Robert H. Scales concluded, "31 of the 35 most successful commanders in World War II served at least one tour as an instructor."<sup>26</sup> Yet, like Berlin, Scales identified a shared characteristic of successful commanders. Indeed, Middleton's extended time at the Army's professional schools exposed him to a curriculum focused on command of large unit formations, known as division and larger units.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, Middleton's combat experience prior to Salerno enabled him to quickly estimate the situation and make rapid decisions in the employment of men and resources. Certain aspects of his education and combat experience influenced his actions on the beaches of Salerno. Simply put, what influences affected Middleton's command of large unit formations?

General Middleton's distinguished career exhibited the influences of military education, combat experience, and an adaptive problem-solving methodology. Military education during the interwar period affected Middleton's command style. He served as student and instructor at the Infantry School, Command and General Staff School (CGSS), and the Army War College from 1919 through 1930.<sup>28</sup> Selected as an Honor Graduate at CGSS in 1924, Middleton taught several future leaders the classes of problem-solving methodology, tactical functions at larger units, and

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 145-305.

<sup>26</sup> Robert H. Scales, "Too Busy to Learn," *Proceedings Magazine* 136, no. 2 (February 2010): 2, <http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2010-02> (accessed August 6, 2010).

<sup>27</sup> United States War Department, *FM 100-5 Field Service Regulations FM 100-5 Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1941), 23-24.

<sup>28</sup> Robert H. Scales, "Too Busy to Learn," *Proceedings Magazine* 136, no. 2 (February 2010): 2, <http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2010-02> (accessed August 6, 2010).

the formulation of combat orders.<sup>29</sup> He became a subject matter expert on the commander's estimate, a mental tool for use "in any tactical operation [during which] the commander must quickly evaluate all the available information bearing on his task, *estimate the situation*, and reach a decision."<sup>30</sup> He attended CGSS with George S. Patton and taught Dwight D. Eisenhower. Combat in the Great War also influenced Middleton's preference to lead from the front in action at Salerno, Sicily, and Bastogne. Consequently, his officers recognized his steadfast calm in the heat of combat. He stated, "Calmness is the greatest of virtues. Every officer I relieved during the war could be classed among the excitable and jittery. The good Lord gave every person his share of common sense, the commander who does not use this valuable commodity is doomed."<sup>31</sup> Lastly, Middleton developed a mental capacity to think through logical solutions when confronted by tactical problems. In addition to Eisenhower, Middleton taught and learned from several future senior army leaders such as Jacob Devers, Courtney Hodges, and Leonard Gerow.<sup>32</sup> Years later, he reflected on the school's impact on his ability to develop solutions, "We put the emphasis on logic—and the punch behind it. I've seen some terribly vacillating executions. I can't recall any place where so much emphasis was placed on thinking. This country owes that school at Leavenworth a great debt."<sup>33</sup> Consequently, he demonstrated an ability to judge a tactical situation on its individual merits and logically form a solution. Therefore, Middleton's interwar education, combat experience, and an adaptive approach for solving problems influenced his commands at the division and corps level.

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<sup>29</sup> Harry A. Smith, *Annual Report of the Commandant the General Service Schools Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 1923-1924* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Command and General Staff School, 1924), 11.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>31</sup> Bruce C. Clarke and John G. Hill, Middleton Questionnaire found in *Art and Requirements of Command*, vol. 2 of *Generalship Study* (Philadelphia: Systems Science Department of the Franklin Institute, 1967), 26.

<sup>32</sup> Harold R. Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge Six American General and Victory in the Ardennes*. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2007, 37.

<sup>33</sup> Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 91.

## Command of 45th Infantry Division

Middleton's first division operation as commander provided him with a formidable test of his ability. Middleton assumed command of the National Guard Division in June of 1942 and immediately transformed it into a combat ready unit for the European Theater of War. Operation HUSKY directed the 45<sup>th</sup> Division to conduct an assault on the beaches of Sicily. The invasion plan ordered his division to conduct an amphibious landing on June 10, 1943 "against a coast line expected to be staunchly defended, was to be a concentrated thrust limited to the southeastern part of the island."<sup>34</sup> General Middleton and his staff planned the division's attack as part of General Omar N. Bradley's II Corps, which included the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Divisions.<sup>35</sup> Middleton's plan directed the 179th and 157th Regimental Combat Teams (RCT) to attack abreast along the beach between Gela and Scoglitti, Sicily.<sup>36</sup> The 157th RCT's mission included seizing Santa Croce Camerina and the high ground near Comiso Airfield and protecting the right flank of the Corps.<sup>37</sup> The 179th RCT's objectives included seizing Scoglitti and Vittoria and securing the Comiso Airfield in conjunction with the 157th RCT. Additionally, the 180th RCT attacked to seize the high ground including an airfield near Biscari and to prepare blocking positions for possible counterattacks.<sup>38</sup> Lastly, Middleton coordinated the mission with the Air Force and Navy in support of the division's plan.<sup>39</sup> Thus, Middleton's first test as division commander came as part of the largest amphibious operation of its day. However, Middleton, confident of his abilities due

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<sup>34</sup> Albert N Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy (CMH Pub), World War II, 50th Anniversary, commemorated ed.* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1993), 62.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

<sup>36</sup> Bishop, Glasgow and Fisher, *The Fighting Forty-Fifth the Combat Report of an Infantry Division*, 15.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>38</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, 64.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

to his vast knowledge and experience, steadfastly commanded his division to substantial victory on the battlefield.

Middleton's education between the wars affected his command of the 45th in the execution of Operation HUSKY, the invasion of Sicily. His attendance and instruction for ten consecutive years at the Infantry School, Command and Staff School (CGSS), and the Army War College validated his World War I experience particularly in observing and influencing decisive actions during the battle. Middleton therefore placed himself forward to discern his commanders' challenges and provided support as needed. Middleton's experience as an instructor allowed him to reflect upon his experience in war and to refine his method for maneuvering a larger formation. Lastly, Middleton utilized institutional mainstays such as the commander's estimate to assess tactical situations and make critical decisions rapidly. Many years earlier, Middleton considered the value of his educational background in a lecture given to the War College. He concluded, "If conducted properly, the Special Service Schools will send intelligent teachers to the next war...Foundations, the soundness of which only a war can test, are being laid in these schools today...None but officers of unusual and proven ability should be entrusted with the teachings of others at these schools."<sup>40</sup> Middleton's knowledge would again prove him worthy of command in the campaign for Sicily just as it had in on the battlefields of France in 1918.

The Sicilian invasion also demonstrated the influence of Middleton's exposure to contemporary concepts found in the service schools. Middleton's time as a student and instructor at the Command and Staff School (CGSS) further solidified his stature as master practitioner of concepts grounded in the army's World War I experience. The 1923 *Field Service Regulations United States Army* became arguably the most influential professional document during Middleton's tour at the Command and Staff School (CGSS). The document prescribed "in the

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<sup>40</sup> Troy H. Middleton, "Infantry and Its Weapons" (lecture to Students at Army War College, Washington, DC, March 7, 1923).

practice of this task, the commander must keep close touch with all subordinate units by means of personal visits and observation; it is essential that he know from personal contact the mental, moral, and physical state...but never hesitate to exact whatever effort is necessary to attain the desired end.”<sup>41</sup> Middleton easily adhered to and instructed the document’s principles, which captured the collective experience of World War I leaders. The document further reflected a contemporary approach to command in the commander positioning himself to observe and influence the action. Middleton believed in the value of locating himself close to the action in order to influence his troops. Based on his experience in France, 1918, he often advised students and peers, “You only gain respect through example. They can tell whether you’re brave. They can tell whether you have good judgment, when you’re displaying it. If they don’t see you they say, ‘Hell, that damned fellow is never around.’”<sup>42</sup>

The division’s landing at Sicily provided another opportunity in combat to apply an institutional concept in practice. Brigadier General Raymond S. McLain, Middleton’s Division Artillery Commander (DAC), attested to his commander’s partiality to locate and observe the challenges facing subordinate commanders at Sicily: “When we got in the new C.P. (Command Post), I went over in the dark and talked to General Middleton, who had just lain down under a tree to get some sleep. He had been up all night the night before and had been everywhere during the day. He was cheerful and well pleased at the capture of Vittoria and Scoglitti.”<sup>43</sup> Middleton’s presence influenced the division’s capture of its intermediate objectives, Vittoria and Scoglitti, by the fourth day of the operation.<sup>44</sup> As he did in several World War I campaigns and would again at

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<sup>41</sup> United States War Department, *Field Service Regulations United States Army* 1923, 4.

<sup>42</sup> Troy H. Middleton, interview by Orley B. Caudill, April 16, 1973, transcript, Mississippi Oral History Program, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

<sup>43</sup> World War II Recreation Association, “BG Raymond S. McLain, 45th Infantry Division,” 45th Infantry Division, [http://www.45thdivision.org/Veterans/McLain\\_Sicily.htm](http://www.45thdivision.org/Veterans/McLain_Sicily.htm) (accessed October 30, 2010).

<sup>44</sup> Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 148.



Salerno, the Thunderbird commander placed himself in a key location to assess the situation, formulate a plan, and act decisively to accomplish the mission.

The campaign for Sicily allowed Middleton to substantiate concepts he developed during his time as an instructor at the Infantry School. Middleton's service as the Night Operations Officer in Charge (OIC) guided employment of his formation throughout the campaign. His encounters with German airpower in the Great War forced Middleton to analyze techniques to offset the capability. He recalled, "Anyone who could look to air developments knew you'd have to go under cover...the only way to do that was to operate at night."<sup>45</sup> During his tour at the Infantry school, Middleton became convinced that continuous night operations served two beneficial purposes. First, the night operations counterbalanced an enemy's deadly air attack capability. Secondly, the continuous activity served to demoralize an enemy under pressure in the defense. At Sicily, Middleton again validated an interwar concept that influenced his command of a division formation. General Omar Bradley, II Corps Commander observed firsthand his 45th commander's relentless approach in the continuance of its attack northward on July 16, 1943. He noted, "For six days and nights, the 45th Division advanced across the center of the island in one of the most nonstop battles of the Mediterranean war. Confined to a single northbound road, Middleton leapfrogged his regiments through another to attack both day and night."<sup>46</sup> Not surprisingly, the 45th Division's campaign operational report on Sicily mirrors the principles Middleton taught his students at the Infantry School and Command and Staff School. The document suggested success came through the employment of successive night attacks, infantry units moving through artillery fire, effective employment of artillery, and commanders

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>46</sup> Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*. (New York City: Random House, 1951), 141.

positioning forward to command the battle.<sup>47</sup> Throughout the invasion, Middleton's knowledge of concepts and techniques he developed as an instructor of several hundred students manifested itself in his division's conduct of the Sicilian campaign.

The Sicily invasion also demonstrated Middleton's mastery of the commander's estimate, a cognitive tool for analysis, which he introduced to hundreds of his students while an instructor at Leavenworth. He employed the estimate as he considered his "mission set forth, instructions under which he was acting, the enemy, and his resources available."<sup>48</sup> Middleton considered the available naval resources in support of his formation. His estimate also accounted for the needs and limitations that faced him in command of the amphibious assault. Therefore, Middleton identified the vital role of naval artillery and the constraints limiting the number of staff members accompanying him in the initial landings. Given the initial need for supporting naval fires, Middleton gave priority to his division artillery staff accompany him and directed Colonel Styron, Division Artillery Executive Officer (DAXO) to coordinate signals and naval gunfire aboard the USS Ancon.<sup>49</sup> Yet Middleton also proved adept at estimating his fluid tactical situation after the initial invasion. Middleton viewed the estimate as an instrument to build efficiency in combat. He reflected this philosophy in his War College thesis that advocated productive results through employment of principles such as simplicity, mobility, and economy.<sup>50</sup> Middleton applied all these in estimating his actions to make decisions and allocate aid to Colonel James M Gavin's 505th paratroopers and Middleton's 180th Regiment. Establishing the beachhead against fortified German positions required rapid decision making to exploit opportunities in the allocation of

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<sup>47</sup> HQ, 45<sup>th</sup> Division, "Report of Operation of the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in the Sicilian Campaign," 1 September 1943, Section VII, 345-0.3, Box 10858, Record Group 407, National Archives II.

<sup>48</sup> United States War Department, *Field Service Regulations United States Army 1923*, 6.

<sup>49</sup> Bishop, Glasgow and Fisher, *The Fighting Forty-Fifth the Combat Report of an Infantry Division*, 40.

<sup>50</sup> Troy H. Middleton, "Proposed Reduction of Equipment and Transportation in the Infantry Division" (paper presented at the Army War College, 1929), 1.

resources. On July 11, 1943, *Herman Goering Division* forces threatened to counterattack and cut off the 45th advancing regiments from its beaches.<sup>51</sup> Gavin's paratroopers and the 180th's infantryman confronted increasing resistance at Biazzo Ridge, near the Vittoria objective. Gavin requested assistance in the form of antitank guns, artillery, and tanks from the nearby 45th Headquarters.<sup>52</sup> The 45th commander recognized the severity of the threat and "General Middleton had been quick to react. Shortly after the antitank guns rolled up, a naval gunfire party and a liaison from the 189th Field artillery reached Colonel Gavin's Headquarters. Within a few minutes the field artillery battalion signaled rounds on the way and the Navy joined in blasting the German troops along the Acate River."<sup>53</sup> Constantly assessing the changing environment, Middleton diverted armor from the 157th RCT to support Gavin's transition to the offensive. Once again, the Thunderbird commander transformed adversity into opportunity. Though education and experience affected his command throughout the campaign, Middleton also relied upon his success from a previous war in commanding his division's assault on Sicily.

His previous combat experience contributed to his successful command of his division's actions in the Sicily campaign. Middleton earned the reputation of an outstanding combat leader of both battalion and regimental sized units in World War I. Middleton distinguished himself in four campaigns; the Calais, Aisne Marne offensive, Saint-Mihiel offensive and the Meuse-Argonne offensive.<sup>54</sup> He witnessed firsthand the cost of sending untrained men to war. Middleton acknowledged of his initial experience with the 4th Infantry Division in World War I, "We were not trained."<sup>55</sup> Yet, Middleton excelled in leading deliberate actions in the campaigns fought on the battlefields of France nearly twenty-four years prior to the Sicily invasion. He preferred

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<sup>51</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, 172-173.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Middleton, interview.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

controlling his subordinate units through direct observation, allowing himself to observe and process information in making quick decisions. Furthermore, Middleton learned from the army's lackluster performance in maneuvering against its German foe in the Great War. Middleton's command influenced his subordinates to accomplish the division's mission in an effective manner.

Middleton's experience of leading untrained men into the trench warfare of World War I drove his desire to ready his Thunderbirds prior to the Sicily division. Middleton trained his battalion for victory in the Great War and led them to success in the Meuse-Argonne campaign. Despite a recent assignment as the 47th Regiment's Executive Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Middleton requested to remain in command of the unit leading the regimental offensive. Not surprisingly, Middleton's battalion succeeded where others failed. He credited intensive training and recalled, "that was where they had been for four years – dug in there – they had lost so many men there north of the Verdun, both the French and the Germans. We went nine kilometers the first morning in this attack through the trenches."<sup>56</sup> His success influenced the 45th Division's preparation for war upon receiving its deployment orders in March 1943. However, its division commander refused ever again to lead inexperienced troops into a theater of war. Instead, Major General Middleton trained the 45th laboriously for landing on Cent Beach in the invasion of Sicily. From March through May of 1943, preparation activities occurred at a "fever pitch" which included planning, equipping and training the Thunderbirds to accomplish the daunting task.<sup>57</sup> He shared his belief in training his troops in a 1923 lecture, declaring, "Going back, team play is essential to success in battle. No unit can have proper team play unless all its parts are trained together...that all are of the same family and that each must contribute to the success of the

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Bishop, Glasgow and Fisher, *The Fighting Forty-Fifth the Combat Report of an Infantry Division*, 6-7.

organization. No organization will ever go completely to pieces when its personnel have worked together and understand the part each is expected to play."<sup>58</sup> Middleton's obligation to prepare his men for combat better than the doughboys of World War I resulted in the success of the division's first combat at Sicily. The 45th Infantry Division captured or destroyed more than 15,000 small arms, 700 machine guns, 49 trucks, 160 aircraft at the Comiso and Biscari airfields, 44 tanks and 220,000 gallons of fuel with hundreds of enemy either killed or wounded.<sup>59</sup> Influenced by his experience in the Great War, Middleton trained his soldiers to victory. Prior to the 45<sup>th</sup>'s deployment, Lieutenant General Lesley McNair, Commander of the Army Ground Forces foresaw great results as he commended the unit for its efficiency and readiness. This showed Middleton's division "better prepared than any division that has left our control to date."<sup>60</sup> Middleton's experience in the Great War influenced his desire to make the 45th Division combat ready, capable of meeting the challenge of conducting an amphibious assault against an expected robust defense in Sicily.

His prior combat experiences likewise influenced his planning and conduct of the beachhead assault at Sicily. The Thunderbird commander faced a tactical situation on the beachhead similar to the assaults on static positions he commanded in the Great War. Consequently, he employed his trusted battle-tested techniques as he had on the battlefields of France in the Great War. Just as he did in leading battalion or regiment operations in World War I, Middleton sought to limit the confusion inherent to combat. Operation HUSKY required a decisive and flexible commander to lead forces in the assault. Middleton knew his untested formation required more control in the conduct of the initial landing. Therefore, he positioned

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<sup>58</sup> Troy H. Middleton, "Infantry and Its Weapons" (lecture to Students at Army War College, Washington, DC, March 7, 1923).

<sup>59</sup> Bishop, Glasgow and Fisher, *The Fighting Forty-Fifth the Combat Report of an Infantry Division*, 23.

<sup>60</sup> Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 144.

himself near the action to observe and control just as he did in his previous commands. Middleton determined, "...the Forty-fifth had never been in combat and I didn't know how they would act. I went with the center regiment so I'd have a regiment on either side of me, which would simplify communication."<sup>61</sup> Additionally, previous combat impressed upon Middleton the value of artillery as a combat multiplier in combat. Hence, Middleton placed emphasis upon planning for naval artillery support for his division. The division profited from his practice during the 45th landing. Similar to marching fire concept he employed for his unit's action at the Bois de Foret, France 1918. Middleton stressed to students and subordinates alike the value of 'marching fire', a process by which to maneuver toward the enemy and place volumes of fire on his position in concert with artillery support..<sup>62</sup> He explained, "We followed a rolling barrage, the artillery advanced its fire by steps...The best way to come out of this thing alive is to stay up by that artillery."<sup>63</sup> He directed division artillery to support his regiments' coordinated assault in this manner at Comiso. Middleton's prior experience ensured success in an attempt to push inland from the beachhead.

Middleton's command exhibited the influence of his previous combat in war through the manner in which he directed his division to seize objectives in Sicily. Middleton observed the futility and horrific results of the frontal assault firsthand. He therefore resolved not to repeat those experiences in commanding his formation to seize the airfield at Comiso. Middleton mentored students and subordinate commanders on his lessons learned. He often advised, "Look for enemy weak points. Try never to take an enemy position in frontal assault. ....If you can move your troops back among the enemy, you'll confuse him. We didn't do much of this in the World

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>63</sup> Middleton, interview.

War.”<sup>64</sup> However, in directing the 179th regiment’s attack against the German defense, he ensured his subordinate commanders benefitted from his knowledge. On July 11, 1943 the 45th Division’s operational log recorded Middleton’s influence over his formation’s approach to seize the key airfield at Comiso: “Striking hard from the flank, Thunderbird troops took the Airport...We hit the enemy where it hurt. They fell back, and after reorganizing, launched a strong counter-attack to push our troops out, but the pressure was thrown back and the attackers were battered harder than before.”<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, his experience in the Great War influenced the Thunderbird commander to maintain the tempo of the attack in keeping an enemy off balance and deny opportunities for numerous counterattacks by the Germans he witnessed in 1918. Middleton pressured his commanders to close on the Comiso airfield, exploiting any ground given by the enemy. Consequently, by the first evening of the invasion on July 10, 1943, both the 179th and 157th Regimental Combat Teams advanced seven miles inward to close on the objective.<sup>66</sup> Both regiments coordinated the final assault under the intense fires of Middleton’s division artillery. Middleton had validated his approach to command at the division level in the 45th’s accomplishments at Sicily.

Despite the enormous influence of education and combat on his division command, Middleton displayed flexibility in adapting his approach to unexpected events in combat. After securing the division’s initial objectives, the 45th commander faced adversity and turned it into opportunity. Middleton instructed his commanders on the evening of July 12, 1943 to continue the attack northward along Highway 124 to Caltagirone.<sup>67</sup> However, General Montgomery, British Eighth Army commander, arbitrarily decided that his forces would use the same route to

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<sup>64</sup> Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 85.

<sup>65</sup> 45th Infantry Division Collection, 45th Division History, Box 1020, 45th Division History 1940-1944, 45th Infantry Division Monthly History Sep 1943, *Division Account of Sicily Landings*, Eisenhower Library, Kansas State Historical Society, 2.

<sup>66</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, 155.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

move up the eastern half of the island.<sup>68</sup> Montgomery coordinated the boundary change with neither Middleton nor his superiors. The 45th commander, not satisfied with his division remaining idle as German forces withdrew to reorganize a defense, coordinated with II Corps for the unconventional movement of his division from the II Corps sector eastern sector to its center sector.<sup>69</sup> Middleton began moving his regimental teams early morning of July 16, 1943. The 45th moved the entire 157th RCT with supporting tanks and artillery through the 1st Infantry Division's rear area to its new assembly area in Riesi to prepare for continuing the attack northward against Catanisetta.<sup>70</sup> The 157th RCT completed its move by midnight on July 17, 1943 to continue the attack northward at 0400 hours.<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile, Middleton's plan called for the remainder of the division's combat teams to complete the 90-mile movement with borrowed trucks from various units in II Corps zone.<sup>72</sup> Consequently, the division achieved its objectives by July 18, 1943 with no loss of momentum to its attack... He reflected on the plan, "I wouldn't have given a nickel for the grade any student would have received if he had proposed such a move at Leavenworth."<sup>73</sup> Yet, Middleton's experience as a battalion Executive Officer (XO) in World War I prepared him to lead such a rapid movement at night. Middleton planned and oversaw the movement of the entire 4th Division's personnel and equipment by horse and mule transport from Vesle to St Mihiel.<sup>74</sup> Despite his extensive experience, Middleton never limited himself with by the book options.

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<sup>68</sup> Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 150.

<sup>69</sup> HQ, 45<sup>th</sup> Division, "Report of Operation of the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in the Sicilian Campaign," 1 September 1943, Section VII, 345-0.3, Box 10858, Record Group 407, National Archives II.

<sup>70</sup> Garland, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, 231-233.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 152.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.



Middleton advanced his growing reputation as a confident, competent senior leader in his command of the 45th's campaigns in Sicily and later action at Salerno. His former student, General Eisenhower, later commented on his performance, "He is a fighter in every sense of the word, whether in pursuit or in more difficult conditions of attack against fortified positions. He has consistently led his formations with an exemplary boldness and success...He has frequently been commended for his energy, leadership and tactical skill by his Army and Army group Commanders."<sup>75</sup> Eisenhower's praise reflected the ideal characteristics of commanders who were products of their World War I experience and the emphasis placed on leader education between the wars. Middleton exhibited both while in division command. His immediate superiors, Generals Omar Bradley and George Patton, concurred with Eisenhower. Lastly, Ike best described Middleton's methodical approach in developing creative if not simple solutions to tactical problems: "General Middleton is particularly highly qualified as a tactician. He has great experience as a combat soldier both in this war and in 1918. He is noted for sound judgment and a shrewd sense of the capabilities of the troops under his command."<sup>76</sup> The Sicily campaign afforded Middleton an opportunity to exercise command in combat under similar conditions he faced in the deliberate, methodical combat of World War I. The campaign provided the Thunderbird commander with further combat experience. His actions turned adversity into opportunity several times throughout the campaigns in Sicily and Italy. Consequently, Middleton's performance in the campaign for Italy earned him command of VIII Corps with larger formations and more diverse capabilities. Following the Normandy breakout, the pursuit of German forces provided substantial challenges even to a commander of his stature. Despite his

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<sup>75</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, 1916-1952, Principal File, Cables Of GCM/DDE Oct 02 1944-April 02, 1945, (1), Box 133, Eisenhower, Dwight D. Papers, Pre-Presidential, Eisenhower Library, Kansas State Historical Society, 24-25.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 28.

success in division command, Middleton faced unique challenges that would test him in leading the corps' pursuit across France.

## **Command of VIII Corps: Into Brittany**

Middleton's combat experience could not fully prepare him for the rapidly changing conditions of the pursuit into Brittany. General George S. Patton recorded in his combat diary on August 1, 1944 that "I cannot make out why Middleton was so apathetic or dumb. I don't know what was the matter with him. Of course it is a little nerve wracking to send troops straight into the middle of the enemy with front, flanks and rear open...Bradley simply wants a bridgehead over the Selune River. What I want and intend to get is Brest and Angers."<sup>77</sup> Patton expressed his frustration with Middleton's cautious approach in the employment of his VIII Corps armored forces, the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions, during the Normandy breakout. He had ordered the 6th Armored Division to advance on Brest. However, Patton found Grow's 6th Armored Division approximately a hundred miles from Brest on August 3, 1944.<sup>78</sup> Patton reviewed Middleton's orders that assigned an intermediate objective of Dinan en route to St. Malo vice Brest. Patton lamented to Grow about the VIII Corps Commander, "And he was a good doughboy too...I'll see Middleton. You go ahead where I told you to go."<sup>79</sup> Middleton served under Patton in both Sicily and Italy. Patton praised Middleton's performance and wrote, "I would like to have him as a corps commander...Middleton could do a job in such a team, using him as a wheel-horse with two flashy players on the flanks. I hope I have the opportunity to get such a combination someday."<sup>80</sup> Certainly, Patton's aggressive command style of the Third Army and his relationship with Middleton influenced the VIII Corps commander's performance. Chronic arthritis in his

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<sup>77</sup> Blumenson, *The Patton Papers, 1940-1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 2:496.

<sup>78</sup> H. (Hubert) Essame, *Patton A Study in Command* (New York: Scribners, 1974), 152.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Blumenson, *The Patton Papers 1940-1945*, 2:368.

knee forced Middleton to relinquish his command of the 45th Infantry Division. Despite uncertainty about his health, General Eisenhower in concert with General Marshall selected him for command of the VIII Corps based primarily upon his combat experience and reputation. Eisenhower noted in a radio dispatch to Marshall that he was, “struggling my best to get a high degree of combat experience represented in this force and I am quite ready to take a chance on Middleton’s arthritis.”<sup>81</sup> Likewise, Marshall agreed that his combat record made him best of all candidates available despite his health issues.<sup>82</sup> However, the pursuit into Brittany presented a unique tactical situation unlike any other in Middleton’s experience.

Command of the VIII Corps following the Normandy breakout into Brittany challenged Middleton for several reasons. Despite his extensive education, he had limited operational experience in the conduct of the pursuit. He was now responsible for a formation comprised of two armor and two infantry divisions, recently transitioned from under General Courtney Hodges’ First Army to Patton’s Third Army. Second, Middleton’s combat experience provided different tactical situations than the one he faced in Brittany. He commanded the corps through its transition from a defensive stalemate of hedgerow fighting in Cotentin to the exploitation and pursuit of the German forces into Brittany. Operation COBRA’s success created an extended battlefield and the associated tactical problems, unprecedented for any previous corps commander in history. The combat proved different from the relatively slow pace he experienced as an infantryman in his previous campaigns. Middleton again proved he was capable of adapting to rapidly changing situations in combat. His 4th and 6th Armored Divisions set Allied records for rapid movement and the capture of 8,300 prisoners as the spearhead advanced into Avranches on

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<sup>81</sup> Bland and Ritenour, *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall Aggressive and Determined Leadership* (Baltimore, Maryland: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 4:318.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 4:317.

July 30th and 31st, 1944.<sup>83</sup> The breakout and advance into Brittany led Middleton to rely upon experience, education, and flexibility to command a larger formation.

Although Middleton lacked operational experience, instruction he received during the interwar era influenced his command of the Brittany pursuit. While assigned to the War College, he attended lectures featuring lessons learned from General Edmund Allenby's command of British forces conducting pursuit operations into Palestine during the First World War. Indeed, Middleton's background provided no experience in a mounted pursuit of the enemy. However, his cavalry tactics instructor, Lieutenant Colonel J.K Herr stressed the relevancy of such operations to Middleton's class, given the growing importance of the tank during the interwar era. Herr outlined the pitfalls associated with Allenby's pursuit in Palestine. Herr informed the students that despite the enemy's disorganization, he "was ever able to throw out effective rear guards...the mobility of the cavalry was decreased by the scarcity of water...The Turks made counterthrusts at the gap between this force and that force on the plains, threatening the communications, and it was necessary to bring up rapidly troops from the plains to save the situation."<sup>84</sup> Herr's lectures categorized the challenges in the mounted pursuit by command and control, logistics and enemy action. The instruction built upon Middleton's foundation of combat as a methodical action and served to solidify further his concept of acting deliberately in command. In contrast with his superior Patton, Middleton focused his command on addressing these intrinsic issues to pursuit operations. Patton however focused on Brest, a prize for speed and audacity. Herr's lecture posited Allenby sought a "knockout" which was achieved by "the interception of enemy forces by the use of highly mobile troops."<sup>85</sup> Middleton appreciated Brest

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<sup>83</sup> Russell F. Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaigns of France and Germany, 1944-45* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 174.

<sup>84</sup> J.K Herr, "Allenby's Campaign in Palestine" (lecture delivered at The Army War College, Conduct of War Course No.10, Washington, DC, February 27, 1930).

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

as an objective but also commanded the corps with a prudent, comprehensive approach that considered the enemy threat to his extended supply lines. Middleton's apprehension manifested itself in concern over bypassing German forces at St. Malo. Middleton knew that bypassing the intermediate objective endangered his operation and "would not eliminate what might develop into a threat against the long lines of communication that would have to be established in Brittany. Allowing strong German forces to remain active at St. Malo would be like permitting a sore to develop into a cancer. Middleton favored immediate surgery."<sup>86</sup> Rather Middleton viewed St. Malo as an intermediate objective necessary to not only protect his lines of communication but also establish a logistical base for clearing the remainder of the peninsula. Middleton's educational background combined with his preference for methodical operations influenced his measured approach toward controlling the progression of the pursuit eastward into Brittany.

Middleton's personal history as an instructor allowed him to defer to the judgment of his commanders spearheading his pursuit. Major Generals John Wood of the 4th Armored Division and Robert Grow of the 6th Armored Division were both loyal disciples of Patton's fledgling armor corps during the interwar period. Indeed, Middleton's time as a student and instructor provided him with limited instruction on the cavalry operations along extended fronts with an increased physical span of control for larger formations.<sup>87</sup> Grow and Wood, however, proved themselves competent in the conduct of expanded operations away from the corps headquarters. Consequently, their actions reinforced Middleton's tendency to acquiesce to his subordinates. Therefore, given their experience and the extended distance from corps headquarters, Middleton often showed deference to their judgment. This tendency came from his time as instructor at Command and Staff General College (CGSS) and the Army War College, Middleton interacted

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<sup>86</sup> Blumenson, Martin. *Breakout and Pursuit United States Army in World War II. The European Theater of Operations*. (Washington, D.C: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1993), 390-391.

<sup>87</sup> United States War Department, *Field Service Regulations-United States Army 1923*, 17.

with several hundred students and taught problem solving through the commander's estimate and the use of logic. Furthermore, he opined, "If you are a senior commander you should always show confidence in your staff and your commanders."<sup>88</sup>

Middleton displayed both confidence in and deference to his subordinates in the pursuit. Grow's 6th Armored Division reached Brest and suspected a German division in front and behind his unit. Grow contacted Middleton and sought his guidance. Middleton calmly responded, "Bob, you've always wanted to use your own judgment, now's your chance to use it."<sup>89</sup> Middleton urged his division commander to make a sound decision based on the estimate of the situation. His service as an instructor also influenced him to promote teamwork within his formation and for his higher headquarters. Wood questioned the utility of the supreme command's plan to capture the Brittany ports with his 4th Armored Division. Wood voiced his displeasure with the eastward advance into Brittany, and stated the Allies "are winning the war the wrong way!"<sup>90</sup> However, Middleton demanded compliance for higher directives rather than questioning the wisdom of orders given to his command. He discovered Wood diverted the 4th Armored Division west toward Paris near Chateaubriand—against the intent of Third Army to secure the ports. Middleton acknowledged the soundness of Wood's logic but also corrected the direction of the division's attack to continue eastward into Brittany. Middleton allowed his subordinate much like his former students to make his case in explaining his actions. He later stated, "Maybe he was right—I am inclined to believe he was—but those weren't the orders we had from Bradley."<sup>91</sup> His actions reflected not only the background of an educator but also loyalty to the higher command.

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<sup>88</sup> Clarke and Hill, *Art and Requirements of Command*, 18-19.

<sup>89</sup> Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 189.

<sup>90</sup> Baldwin, *Tiger Jack*, 44.

<sup>91</sup> Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 188-189.

Consequently, he ensured formation's leadership and resources remained focused on the solving the problem assigned instead of creating new ones.

Middleton's attendance at the service schools influenced his cautious conduct of the campaign. He had mastered the art of the estimate in his command of the 45th Division at Salerno and Sicily. Middleton learned and instructed future commanders of large formations to trust in the estimate. Prior to the breakout from Normandy, he ordered his staff to prepare an estimate examining the effects of a pursuit into Brittany. The VIII Corps' Brittany After Action Report (AAR) indicated higher headquarters viewed capturing St. Malo as an easy task because of the armored spearhead's advance.<sup>92</sup> However, the VIII Corps' estimate suggested the port and associated connecting road networks allowed for reinforcement into the city.<sup>93</sup> "The estimate proved valid as the German garrison at St. Malo grew from an estimated 5,000 to 15,000 troops and made its capture a significant task."<sup>94</sup> Middleton relied upon his estimate of the situation, a mental model that he taught to hundreds of students. Criticized for cautious employment of armor, Middleton utilized an analysis of the tactical situation to best support his mission accomplishment. In contrast, Patton and his pupils approached the pursuit as validation of the cavalry's interwar experiments. Middleton disagreed with Patton's orders to countermand his selection of Dinan for Grow's 6th Armored Division. On August 3, 1944, Middleton messaged his concerns to Grow, "We are getting too strung out. We must take Dinan and St. Malo before we can proceed."<sup>95</sup> Later, he concluded that the decision to "barrel on" to Brest prior to the Germans establishing a fortified defense was unnecessary and dangerous: "I never thought any

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<sup>92</sup> VIII Corps Headquarters, *Report of the VIII Corps After Action Against Enemy Forces in Normandy and Brittany, France for the Period 1-31 August 1944*, September 11, 1944, Records Group 407, Area 270, Row 53, Compartment 3, Shelf 5, Box 3394-3395, National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Message, Middleton to Grow, 1110, 3 Aug; Middleton for Grow, 3 Aug, 6th Armored Division G-3 Journal File. Quoted in Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, 376.

armored outfit could capture Brest which housed the pens for the German submarines that operated in the Atlantic. I knew from the maps and aerial reconnaissance photographs that it was heavily organized...The Germans weren't going to let the city go by forfeit."<sup>96</sup> Middleton's estimate again contradicted the Third Army's estimates of the enemy strength. Patton informed Middleton there were no more than 10,000 troops on the entire peninsula. Middleton's VIII Corps later captured 38,000 Soldiers at Brest.<sup>97</sup> Historians often attribute German forces repositioning into Brest to Middleton's delay of 6th Armored Division's movement, thus making its reduction more difficult. However, Russell F. Weigley concluded, "The fortifications of Brest were so large and complex—extensive caves and bombproofs developed by the Germans from strong old French works—and the determination of the enemy to hold on to major ports was so intense, that it seems impossible that Grow's division alone could have captured the place."<sup>98</sup> Middleton's education influenced his corps command in Brittany as it had in his division command in Sicily and Italy. However, his education allowed him to examine prudently the risks to his much larger formation across an expanded area of operations. Likewise, his combat experiences influence a cautious approach as Middleton encountered a tactical situation unlike the relatively deliberate and methodical combat of his previous experiences.

Despite his experience in combat, his infantry officer mentality created friction with his cavalry subordinates and his superior, Patton. His prior combat experience and an infantry officer placed him at odds with the cavalymen under his command. His mentality toward the pursuit clashed with his subordinates, Major Generals John Wood of the 4th Armored Division and Robert Grow of the 6th Armored Division. Both commanders "regarded themselves as belonging to the Patton School of thought...felt toward General Patton, an affinity they could not feel

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<sup>96</sup> Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 187-188.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. Blumenson verified the number of German prisoners taken at Brest in his official account found in *Breakout and Pursuit*, 653.

<sup>98</sup> Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-1945*, 185.



toward Middleton, bred in the infantry.”<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, both “became infected with an enthusiasm and a self-confidence that were perfectly suited to exploitation but proved to be a headache to those who sought to retain a semblance of control.”<sup>100</sup> Middleton preferred controlling his units through observation of critical actions in combat. Controlling the armor spearhead’s advance fell outside his comfort level. Additionally, dissension centered around the use of objectives in the Brittany campaign as well as the necessity of all VIII Corps combat power employed in the clearance of the peninsula. As discussed above, Middleton corrected his subordinate’s attempt to circumvent orders from higher. Russell Weigley noted Middleton “was by no means a timid officer, as his acquiescence in Wood’s bending of orders had shown; but having his corps charge off in opposite directions at once without communication and thus without central control was too much for him to accept.”<sup>101</sup> Just as in the Cotentin peninsula or on the beaches of Salerno, Middleton attempted to control his larger formation through the infantry method of assigning intermediate objectives, such as St. Malo to control the movement of his forces.<sup>102</sup> He did so as he advocated avoiding “complicated maneuvers” and “to expect results from large numbers of men the operations must be kept simple.”<sup>103</sup> In contrast, his commander, General Patton advocated a bolder approach in the clearance of Brittany with emphasis on “speed, audacity, even recklessness...not meticulous advances from one set point to another.”<sup>104</sup> Both influenced his approach toward command during the breakout. Additionally, both created friction between himself, the Third Army Commander, and his subordinate commanders. Due to

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<sup>99</sup> Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, 350.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-1945*, 182.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Clarke and Hill, *Art and Requirements of Command*, 6-7.

<sup>104</sup> Blumenson, *The Patton Papers 1940-1945*, 2: 491-492.

his past success in a more methodical style of combat, Middleton appeared overwhelmed at times in command of the pursuit operation.

His previous combat experience also influenced Middleton to command operations into Brittany with caution. His difficulty in command of the Brittany operations resulted from multiple experiences in a methodical, deliberate form of combat as in infantryman. Middleton observed firsthand the German willingness to counterattack in the trench warfare of the First World War most recently in the nearly disastrous result at the Salerno beachhead. The VIII Corps commander recognized his formation's vulnerability to German airpower and counterattack as it crossed the Se'e and the Selune rivers.<sup>105</sup> Middleton again became particularly concerned with counterattacks against his extended lines of communication near St. Malo. His thinking contradicted the Third Army's advocacy for bypassing the area. Whereas Third Army focused on forward progress, Middleton concerned himself with the enemy to his front and flanks. He stated the plan for pursuit was "played by ear – strictly off the cuff...Our action depended on what the enemy had done and was doing."<sup>106</sup>

Middleton's World War I experience, interwar assignments, and command of a light infantry division limited his ability to control the armored spearhead of VIII Corps. As General Mark W. Clark remarked of the VIII Corps pursuit into Brittany, "A deep envelopment by armor was not in their experience or concept. We had few generals who could have used well an armored corps."<sup>107</sup> VIII Corps owned an extended battlefield ranging one hundred to two hundred miles vice the comparatively narrow area Middleton held in command of a regiment or division in World War I and Sicily. Rather, Middleton the infantryman often appeared judicious in the use of armor in his corps command. Consequently, as indicated above, friction emerged between the

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Middleton, interview.

<sup>107</sup> Ganz, "Questionable Objective: The Brittany Ports, 1944," 87. Note: General Clark expressed his opinion in a letter to the author who included it in this article.

corps commander and his subordinate commanders as well as his immediate superior—all cavalymen. Middleton struggled in controlling the armored divisions during the pursuit into Brittany. Unlike his previous campaigns, Middleton could not position himself to observe or control critical actions of his armor divisions. The tactical pace of the operation simply did not allow him to command the formation by his preferred method. His contribution to the lessons learned in Sicily indicated his preference for a command approach grounded in his experience and parted with the schoolhouse solution on command. Middleton believed as a commander, his location served as the command post.<sup>108</sup> He commented on his division command, “The commander who spent much of his time at the command post as we teach it, failed to perform his duties... their place in combat is at a place where they can observe the fight. No man can be sure of a decision made from second-hand information.... The commander should see the ground and he should see the reactions of both friendly and enemy troops.”<sup>109</sup> However, Middleton could not observe the action of his armored divisions due to the fact that Third Army desired his headquarter remain at Avranches rather than displacing into Brittany to control his forces.<sup>110</sup> Historian Martin Blumenson identified the VIII Corps commander’s challenge as “General Middleton, methodical and meticulous, found himself in a whirlwind that threatened to upset his ideas of orderly and controlled progress... the exigencies that emerged from rapid succession as a result of the changes from the positional hedgerow warfare in the Cotentin to wide-open exploitation in Brittany.”<sup>111</sup> VII Corps’ swift advance in August 1944 afforded him limited opportunity for observing his armor commanders’ situations. Thus, Middleton found himself at the mercy of receiving delayed, second hand information in command of the pursuit. Brittany

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<sup>108</sup> Allied Force Headquarters, *Training Memorandum 50: Lessons Learned from the Sicilian Campaign* (APO 512, Allied Forces Headquarters, 20 November 1943), 6.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Martin Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, 351.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 350.

proved a different type of combat in contrast to the methodical advances he led across the fields of France in World War I or the rugged terrain of Sicily and Italy. VIII Corps never satisfactorily established control to Middleton's standards, as "the corps was now stretched over a vast area and moving rapidly. Signal communications, which were severely strained when the Corps was north of Avranches, now broken completely."<sup>112</sup> Middleton's cautious conduct of the pursuit reflected his battle hardened experience. However, as in previous battles, he once again proved his ability to adapt his methods to achieve mission accomplishment.

Middleton proved capable of adapting the manner in which he controlled and employed forces to set conditions for the pursuit. Despite his misgivings with the lack of control over the conduct of the pursuit, He recognized and supported Patton's need for speed and audacity in the conduct of the pursuit. He realized the conventional control measure of a phase line to control his units' movement prevented an opportunity for exploiting the enemy's ability to react to rapid movement. Accordingly, he supported his boss in parting from the conventional infantry method of and changed his mindset of operating with only the next phase line in mind.<sup>113</sup> Though he still advocated tactical caution based on his judgment and experience, Middleton never allowed conventional thinking to constrain his options. He also deviated from the norm in the employment of his units. Middleton utilized his men and resources to meet his tactical needs and worried not if the mission met with accepted doctrinal thinking of the day. In breaking with standards, he set conditions for the 4th Armored Division's success in the pursuit. During the early July 1944 stalemate in Normandy, "against the advice of armored experts...Middleton had assigned it a defensive tour in his lines. Thereby the division had received just enough seasoning to give it a

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<sup>112</sup> VIII Corps Headquarters, *Report of the VIII Corps After Action Against Enemy Forces in Normandy and Brittany, France for the Period 1-31 August 1944, September 11, 1944*, Records Group 407, Area 270, Row 53, Compartment 3, Shelf 5, Box 3394-3395, National Archives Building, Washington, DC, (NAB).

<sup>113</sup> Middleton, interview.

battlefield sharpness uncommon to new divisions by the time it became a corps spearhead."<sup>114</sup> Consequently, the 4th Division rapidly positioned itself to capture Avranches by July 29, 1944.<sup>115</sup> Despite his extensive service in the Army service schools, Middleton knew to deviate from the accepted norms in the control and employment of his units. Moreover, just as in Sicily, Middleton directed an operation that again went against the school solution.

He directed his spearhead units to conduct a movement that adapted to the corps' tactical situation. Middleton planned and executed the unconventional movement of his armored spearhead through the Avranches bottleneck during the night of August 1, 1944. Despite the VIII Corps' situation report indicating communications were practically "nil", Middleton directed the action to exploit the enemy's disorganization.<sup>116</sup> He described the extraordinary action: "We put two armored divisions through Avranches in one night, on one road... Well, that can't be done. You get your map and try to work it out. The time and space factors will not permit it. They will give you a big zero at Leavenworth if you did that."<sup>117</sup> A British officer informed him that his corps risked a chance of a counterattack into its flank. Middleton responded that he was "not disturbed by it... I happen to know the infantry division that's guarding my left flank here and the man commanding it (Major General Clarence Heubner, a colleague of Middleton's)... they're not going to run over the First Division."<sup>118</sup> Once again, the VIII Corps commander went against conventional solutions of the day based upon his judgment and experience. Middleton's decision resulted in the timely resumption of his formation's advance into Brittany.

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<sup>114</sup> Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-1945*, 173.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> VIII Corps Headquarters, *Situation Report August 2, 1944*, 208-3.8 Situation Reports July 1944-May 1945, Records Group 407, Stack Area 270, Row 53, Compartment 5, Shelf 5, Box 3491-3492, National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB).

<sup>117</sup> Middleton, interview.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

Combat experience and interwar education influenced Middleton's command of the pursuit into Brittany. The transition to rapid mobile operations from the stalemate in Cotentin to the pursuit into Brittany tested Middleton. Unlike his previous experience in division command, he attempted to control action that at times he could neither observe nor influence. However, steadfast and calm, he adapted his approach and overcame his own biases to accomplish the mission despite friction with his superior and subordinates. As in division command, Middleton relied upon trusted conventions such as the commander's estimate. Indeed his estimate of the tactical situation influenced his attempts to control deliberately the progression of his forces. Consequently, he received criticism for an overly cautious approach. However, Middleton's use of the estimate developed a prudent approach that considered the effects of his action on his entire formation not just a single division. Additionally, his logic identified the need for an initial objective of St. Malo or Dinan. Without a logistical base established on the peninsula, subsequent operations proved challenging along his extended lines. Despite his challenges, Middleton proved his mettle as a corps commander in soundly making judgments throughout the course of the pursuit. Historian Dave Mason accurately identified Middleton's dilemma in that he concerned himself with the problems of an entire corps and constantly considered the role of his corps in relation to the higher headquarters.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, Middleton "would no doubt have gone down in history as an irresponsible commander who recklessly sacrificed his divisions or ignored true objectives...gambling always looks brilliant if it is successful, the gambler is generally blamed if he fails. There is every place in the conduct of a war for the counsel of caution."<sup>120</sup> Middleton gave counsel to his caution based on his past experiences and education. Both enabled his ability to meet the demands of and adapt to a rapidly changing situation. Middleton would again confront such an environment in the defense of Bastogne.

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<sup>119</sup> David Mason, *Breakout Drive to the Seine* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1968), 90.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

## Command of VIII Corps: The Ardennes

Middleton's decision-making at the Ardennes proved decisive in stemming the tide of the German offensive. He again used his service school education to develop and implement solution to the tactical problem. The defense of Bastogne allowed Middleton to observe and influence his defense through the commitment of his units. Now well established in corps command, Middleton appeared more willing to deviate from his institutional upbringing. However, General George S. Patton disapproved of his former classmate's action. Middleton had decided to hold Bastogne at all costs and recollected, "If we had not held Bastogne we would have opened the floodgate."<sup>121</sup> Patton, upon arriving at Middleton's headquarters, viewed the situation differently, and notified him, "You're just [the] damnest fool I've ever seen...put the 101st airborne division in Bastogne [and] get it surrounded."<sup>122</sup> Middleton made the call based on his desire to deny the enemy's access to the critical road network near Bastogne. His options were limited as were his reserves. Middleton knew his unit's capabilities and trusted his commanders. He responded, "Somebody's got to hold it. That's all I had and I have great confidence in them. I don't think they are going to run Tony McAuliffe and those paratroopers out of there."<sup>123</sup> Middleton learned the importance of decision making at the army's service schools. Brigadier General Harry Smith lectured class at the Command and General Staff School that among the curriculum's aims was the commander's need to issue a "clear, simple, and complete decision...A weak or wobbly decision, or one that can be read in two ways, will be unsatisfactory always."<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, army field regulations during his years at the Command and General Staff School (CGSS) clearly

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<sup>121</sup> Middleton, interview.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Harry A. Smith, "Address at Opening Exercises of the Command and General Staff School," Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, September 10, 1923 (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: General Service Schools Press, 1923): 5-7, quoted in Harold R Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge Six American General and Victory in the Ardennes* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2007), 18.

underscored the prominence of problem solving in developing sound decisions. Field regulations posited, “To frame a suitable order the leader must first make an estimate of the situation, culminating in a decision upon a definite plan of action. He or his staff must then actually draft or word the orders which will carry his decision into effect.”<sup>125</sup> Of all classes he attended at Command and General Staff School (CGSS), Middleton asserted his classes in Tactical Principles and Decisions were among the most important.<sup>126</sup> The knowledge he gained at the service schools and combat experience allowed him to judge when to diverge from conventional methods influenced his command of the VIII Corps at the Ardennes.

Middleton’s depleted VIII Corps occupied defensive positions in the Ardennes along the Our River and the *Schnee Eifel*. The front served as an orientation area for new U.S. divisions His corps as of December 15, 1944 consisted of the 4th, 28th, and 106th Infantry Divisions.<sup>127</sup> The 106th occupied the *Schnee Eifel* (Snow Plateau), key terrain overlooking the German border. V Corps occupied the sector north of the 106th with the 28th Division defending the large central portion of VIII Corps’ sector.<sup>128</sup> The Combat Command of the 9th Infantry Division filled the gap between the 28th on its northern flank and the 4th Infantry Division’s sector in the southernmost corps’ area.<sup>129</sup> At the onset of the German attack, VIII Corps’ limited reserves consisted of Reserve Command of the 9th Armored and four battalions of combat engineers.<sup>130</sup> The VIII Corps’ offensive pushed through France and Belgium to the Roer River, weakening the

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<sup>125</sup> United States War Department, Field, *Service Regulations United States Army 1923*, 6.

<sup>126</sup> Price, Troy H. *Middleton: A Biography*, 90.

<sup>127</sup> VIII Corps Headquarters, *Situation Report December 15, 1944*, 208-3.8 Situation Reports July 1944-May 1945, Records Group 407, Stack Area 270, Row 53, Compartment 5, Shelf 5, Boxes 3491-3492, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

<sup>128</sup> VIII Corps Headquarters, *After Action Report, Dec 12-Dec 28, 1944*, 208-0.3, After Action Reports, Records Group 407, Stack Area 270, Row 53, Compartment 6, Shelf 2, Box 3518, National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB).

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.



organization's combat power. Major Generals Norman D. Cota and Raymond O. Barton of the 28<sup>th</sup> and 4th respectively had proven their mettle in the Hürtgen Forest.<sup>131</sup> Major General Alan W. Jones commanded the 106th Infantry Division, a National Guard formation and recently arrived in theater. At the start of the German offensive, all divisions assigned to VIII Corps had less than one month with the organization. Middleton calmly estimated his situation and knew his limited resources needed to slow the German offensive.

As he had throughout his entire career, Middleton again employed the mental model of the commander's estimate in evaluating the tactical situation. Middleton, now a seasoned commander of VIII Corps, relied upon the battle-tested model responsible for his success in previous campaigns. Middleton considered his own command in terms of strength and supporting troops, the terrain and the enemy in his estimate of the situation.<sup>132</sup> He acknowledged his depleted corps occupied an 88-mile front along the Our River as of December 15, 1944.<sup>133</sup> From his headquarters at Bastogne, Middleton deduced his weakened corps and limited reserves required an economy of force effort to delay any German offensive action. The VIII Corps' extensive front exceeded by nearly three times the doctrinal distance to establish an adequate defense.<sup>134</sup> The Army's official history of Bastogne recorded the VIII Corps' mission as "defend this line in place."<sup>135</sup> Middleton also considered the enemy situation relative to his own and asserted both sides faced a lack of resources. He stated the Germans thought "they were going to capture some ammunition dumps; we didn't have any. I was a poor boy; I was just living from day to day. The

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<sup>131</sup> Hugh M. Cole, *United States Army in World War II - The European Theater of Operations - The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, 55.

<sup>132</sup> United States War Department, Field, *Service Regulations United States Army 1923*, 6.

<sup>133</sup> Walter Bedell Smith Collection: Collection of World War II Documents, 1941-1945, Box 41, *The Siege of Bastogne Part I*, Eisenhower Library, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>134</sup> Bruce Quarrie, *The Ardennes Offensive US VII and VIII Corps and British XXX Corps Central Sector*, ed. John Moore and Lee Johnson, Order of Battle Series (Oxford, United Kingdom: Osprey Publishing, 2000), 44.

<sup>135</sup> Walter Bedell Smith Collection: Collection of World War II Documents, 1941-1945, Box 41, *The Siege of Bastogne Part I*, Eisenhower Library, Kansas State Historical Society.

only ammunition I had, the snow covered it up.”<sup>136</sup> As in Brittany, Middleton used his estimate to view the situation from the German point of view. He determined the Schnee Eifel and Our River crossing sites provided entry points to the road networks of St. Vith and Bastogne. Despite a history of prior German offensives into the Ardennes, the supreme command discounted the possibility of an attack. Middleton’s higher headquarters, First Army took this position due to the onset of winter, logistical strains and “Allied strength was so great that the Germans could not push far enough to reach really vital objectives.”<sup>137</sup> The VIII Corps commander raised his concern with the extended front to 12th Army Group commander, General Bradley: “Okay, somebody is going to get his tail burned some day with these wide fronts.’ [He replied] ‘Oh but don’t you worry.’ I said, ‘All right, when the Germans invaded France, they came through here’ ... Well, they brushed it off. So, they did, they hit there.”<sup>138</sup> However, Middleton correctly estimated the vital role of the road network within VIII Corps’ sector. He knew the German command needed to reach the Meuse crossings as quickly as possible. Therefore, he began to formulate a plan to defend Bastogne that positioned his minimal forces to delay in order to trade land for time. Writing on the German *V Panzer Army* opposing VIII Corps, Historian Harold Winton observed, “Time was the most important ingredient of General Manteuffel’s plan. In the south and center, he anticipated seizing the major villages along the Skyline Drive by noon on the 16<sup>th</sup> ... Manteuffel knew that if it took a week to ten days to get to the Meuse, it would be virtually impossible to get *across* the Meuse.”<sup>139</sup> Middleton’s attendance at the service schools allowed him to formulate a plan that made Manteuffel’s task more difficult if not impossible.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Middleton, interview.

<sup>137</sup> Letter, Eisenhower to Marshall, 10 January 1945, in SHAEF message file, Plans and Operations, folder #7, as quoted in Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, 56.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge Six American Generals and Victory in the Ardennes*, 142.

Middleton's studies at the War College instilled in him the need to formulate a plan based upon his estimate. He instructed CGSS students for years on the need to first estimate their situation in order to make a "decision upon a definite plan of action."<sup>140</sup> Moreover, at the War College, Middleton learned that planning and decision-making were essential to command of large unit formations, corps or divisions. His teachers instructed, "An officer will be judged by his plan, his imagination, the use of his resources, and his adherence to a plan, once formed, until it is proven that the plan must fail – in short by that highest of all qualifications of a commander – the courage of responsibility."<sup>141</sup> There based upon his estimate, he immediately developed a plan to stop the German attack which began on December 16, 1944. Therefore, he quickly developed a two-phased defense that emphasized a delay along the line of defense and a denial of road networks in front of St. Vith and Bastogne.<sup>142</sup> Middleton recognized the need to "cause a maximum delay by defending in place along the original line of the corps."<sup>143</sup> Middleton understood his formation's requirements just as he did at Salerno and again in Brittany. His plan focused on the factor of time in order to allow First Army and Third Army forces to reposition to defeat the German penetration. General Omar Bradley recalled, "My decision to hold Bastogne, at all costs, had been anticipated by Middleton even as his front was crumbling to pieces. When I called Troy to give him the order to hold that crucial road junction, he replied that he had already instructed his troops there to dig in and hold."<sup>144</sup> Accordingly, Middleton employed his depleted organization to delay the German offensive aimed at reaching the Meuse at Liège. Using all of his

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<sup>140</sup> United States War Department, *Field Service Regulations United States Army 1923* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office), 6.

<sup>141</sup> J.L. DeWitt, "Orientation, the Army War College Course, 1929-1930," (lecture delivered at the Army War College, Washington, DC, September 4, 1929).

<sup>142</sup> VIII Corps Headquarters, *After Action Report, Dec 12-Dec 28, 1944*, 208-0.3, After Action Reports, Records Group 407, Stack Area 270, Row 53, Compartment 6, Shelf 2, Box 3518, National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB).

<sup>143</sup> Walter Bedell Smith Collection: Collection of World War II Documents, 1941-1945, Box 41, *The Siege of Bastogne Part I*, Eisenhower Library, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>144</sup> Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York City: Random House, 1951), 467.

remaining reserves, he committed the 9th Combat Command Reserve (CCR) and four engineer combat battalions to the task.<sup>145</sup> Middleton showed the “courage of responsibility” in adhering to his plan while awaiting the arrival of promised reinforcements to block the key road networks at Bastogne, Houffalize and St. Vith. Consequently, his orders sufficiently delayed German forces at the Clerf River crossing and along the routes leading to Bastogne. As he had in division command at Salerno, Middleton planned and made rapid decisions to employ units to meet his tactical needs.

In the defense of the Ardennes, Middleton demonstrated a committee style approach to solving tactical problems. Ever confident in his subordinate commanders, he encouraged teamwork and consultation to search for solutions to tactical problems. First Army directed the 7th Armored Division to VIII Corps at Bastogne on December 17, 1944.<sup>146</sup> VIII Corps ordered Brigadier General Bruce Clarke’s 7th Combat Command B (CCB) to St. Vith on December 17 to reinforce Major General Jones’ 106th Division.<sup>147</sup> By December 18, Brigadier General Hasbrouck closed on St. Vith with the remainder of 7th Armored.<sup>148</sup> Yet, Middleton put neither recently promoted Brigadier General Hasbrouck nor Major General Jones in charge of the task-organized force at St. Vith. Middleton directed Hasbrouck to “assist” the 106th in St. Vith defense.<sup>149</sup> The German attack decimated the 106th and forced Jones to locate his headquarters

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<sup>145</sup> Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-1945*, 480.

<sup>146</sup> Hugh M. Cole, *United States Army in World War II - The European Theater of Operations - The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, Reprint ed. (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1988), 274.

<sup>147</sup> VIII Corps Headquarters, *Situation Report December 18, 1944*, 208-3.8 Situation Reports July 1944-May 1945, Records Group 407, Stack Area 270, Row 53, Compartment 5, Shelf 5, Boxes 3491-3492, National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB).

<sup>148</sup> Walter Bedell Smith Collection: Collection of World War II Documents, 1941-1945, Box 41, *The Siege of Bastogne Part I*, Eisenhower Library, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>149</sup> Cole, *United States Army in World War II - The European Theater of Operations - The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, Reprint ed. (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1988), 274.

with Habrouck at Vielsam.<sup>150</sup> Critical of the decision, historian John D. Eisenhower suggested Jones' seniority to Hasbrouck influenced Middleton and "his preference for cooperation rather than unity of command caused less confusion than might be imagined...in the meantime, Hasbrouck plugged the gaps in the line with his own troops regardless of the units attached to the 106<sup>th</sup>."<sup>151</sup> Middleton's preference for cooperation most likely originated in the committee style approach he instructed at the Command and General Staff School (CGSS). The commandant changed the class curriculum during the 1925 school year to a committee system. Instructors cooperated with and counseled their students to "remove any difficulties which the students might have which were not cleared up in the conferences and to bring about a closer relationship between the faculty and student body."<sup>152</sup> Despite a lack of a unified command, Hasbrouck understood the intent of his mission and "had no doubt General Middleton counted on the defense of the St. Vith Road center."<sup>153</sup> John Cribbet, Middleton's aide de camp, stated, "Above all he understood the nature of war and the nature of men. His ability to work with people of diverse talents, to proceed without the necessity of raising his voice—or even issuing orders—to me was a complete mystery. It seemed that he was able to by quiet persuasion, by pointing out what needed to be done, to get people to carry out his exact orders."<sup>154</sup> Middleton's background as an educator influenced his belief his subordinates could collaborate in a coordinated effort.

Middleton's experience in holding terrain at critical times in combat with limited resources allowed him calmly to direct the defense of Bastogne. He performed exceptionally well

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 288.

<sup>151</sup> John D. Eisenhower, *The Bitter Woods the Battle of the Bulge* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 235.

<sup>152</sup> Edward L. King, *Annual Report of the Commandant the General Service Schools Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 1925-1926* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1926), 11.

<sup>153</sup> Cole, *United States Army in World War II - The European Theater of Operations - The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, Reprint ed. (Washington DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1988), 288.

<sup>154</sup> Price, *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 261.

at leading limited formations with limited resources to hold terrain against unfavorable odds. Commanding in the 47th regiment at Sergy and St. Thibaut in World War I taught him the validity of holding at all costs even if “for a large part of the time it (his unit) could do nothing but take terrific punishment.”<sup>155</sup> Middleton’s 45th Division held at all costs along a 45-mile front in both Sicily and Italy.<sup>156</sup> As he did in Salerno and Brittany, Middleton understood how his unit’s action supported his higher headquarters. Consequently, his decisions at Bastogne reflected his intent to buy time for First and Third Armies to respond to the crisis. The Army’s official account held that Middleton “coolly evaluated each impassioned request from his hard pressed subordinates before allowing any of his tiny reserve to be committed.”<sup>157</sup> Middleton assumed direct control of several units and employed the units, as he needed in support of his plan. The Army’s official history recorded that it was a “period of piecemeal reaction” with VIII Corps employing mechanics, cooks and engineers to shore up its gaps near Bastogne.<sup>158</sup> Middleton authorized the formation of Team Snafu, a collection of stragglers in the defense of Bastogne on December 19, 1944.<sup>159</sup> He ordered the overrun remnants of the 9th Armored CCR, “collected south of Bastogne and sent to the 101st Airborne. His order included the remainder of the 10th Armored CCB. Moreover, Middleton’s command attached any troops who withdrew back to Bastogne to the 101st Airborne.”<sup>160</sup> Historian Hugh Cole noted the VIII Corps commander faced difficulty in building a “standard defense taught in any of the higher army schools or service

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<sup>155</sup> Pollard and Middleton, *The Forty-Seventh Infantry: A History*, 1017-1919, 46-53.

<sup>156</sup> Robert E. Merriam, *Dark December the Full Account of the Battle of the Bulge* (New York City: Ziff-Davis Publishing Company, 1947), 75.

<sup>157</sup> Cole, *United States Army in World War II - The European Theater of Operations - The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, 513.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Walter Bedell Smith Collection: Collection of World War II Documents, 1941-1945, Box 41, *The Siege of Bastogne Part 3*, Eisenhower Library, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>160</sup> VIII Corps Headquarters, *After Action Report, Dec 12-Dec 28, 1944*, 208-0.3, After Action Reports, Records Group 407, Stack Area 270, Row 53, Compartment 6, Shelf 2, Box 3518, National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB).

regulations.”<sup>161</sup> Consequently, Middleton committed his last reserves to slow German columns on approaches into Bastogne.<sup>162</sup> Middleton’s knowledge from years of combat under similar stressful situations enabled him to make sound decisions to hold terrain at any cost.

It was his experience that influenced Middleton’s willingness to defer to the judgment of his subordinate commanders. Competent, seasoned veterans such as Generals Woods and Grow fortified his tendency to rely upon a subordinate commander’s initiative and judgment. He often deferred to his subordinates on the premise that their situational awareness was greater than at corps<sup>163</sup> Major General Alan W. Jones’ untested 106th Division completed its relief of the 2nd Infantry Division in the Schnee Eifel on 12 December 1944.<sup>164</sup> Despite the greenness of the commander and his unit, Middleton extended the same confidence in the Jones as any of his other subordinate commanders. However, unlike Wood or Grow, Jones “was the complete opposite of the Patton type of general. Many of his own troops had never seen him, for he kept in the background, running the 106th Division in a quiet, unspectacular manner.”<sup>165</sup> The VIII Corps’ After Action Report (AAR) indicated Middleton twice contacted Jones to express his concern for “continuous and increasing activity” reported on the VIII Corps’ front.<sup>166</sup> Furthermore, the AAR recorded General Jones “felt confident of the security of his position, especially that he had information that the 7th Armored Division was on its way to assist him and scheduled to close by

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<sup>161</sup> Cole, *United States Army in World War II - The European Theater of Operations - The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, 311.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Clarke and Hill, *Art and Requirements of Command*, 18-19.

<sup>164</sup> VIII Corps Headquarters, *Situation Report December 13, 1944*, 208-3.8 Situation Reports July 1944-May 1945, Records Group 407, Stack Area 270, Row 53, Compartment 5, Shelf 5, Boxes 3491-3492, National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB).

<sup>165</sup> John Toland, *Battle the Story of the Bulge* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1959), 9-10.

<sup>166</sup> VIII Corps Headquarters, *After Action Report, Dec 12-Dec 28, 1944*, 208-0.3, After Action Reports, Records Group 407, Stack Area 270, Row 53, Compartment 6, Shelf 2, Box 3518, National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB).

1500 the next day.”<sup>167</sup> The VIII Corps commander recalled telling Jones of his concern for “422nd and 423rd Regiments on the Schnee Eifel, the night of December 16. A later call from Jones told of his building pressures, with Jones suggesting that his two regiments be pulled back. Middleton approved and assumed that the pullback would be carried out.”<sup>168</sup> In contrast, the 106th unit history recorded, “Jones did not feel he should urge too much the withdrawal of the 422nd and 423rd, since to give up that ground and uncover the direct route to Bastogne and the Stenay gap gateway to Verdun—except in vital necessity, would not redound to the credit of the division...Middleton had left the decision to him.”<sup>169</sup> Regardless of the contradictory accounts, his deference to his commander created confusion that contributed to the eventual surrender of the two regiments. Middleton believed “that once you assigned a task to a person, leave him alone. If he needs advice, he will come to you.”<sup>170</sup> However, he trusted his subordinate despite only having him in his corps four days prior to the German offensive. Furthermore, the corps commander commanded with a belief that the commander on the ground knew best the tactical situation. Consequently, he deferred the critical decision to withdraw and preserve combat power from the Schnee Eifel to an inexperienced commander in Jones.

Despite the misfortune of the 106th Division, Middleton adapted to the tactical situation through the employment of his units according to his need rather than conventional norms. His judgment at Bastogne allowed him to break with the armor dogma of massing tanks at the decisive point. Middleton recognized the need to employ forces to delay the German offensive along multiple roads leading to Bastogne. Therefore, on December 18, 1944, he directed Colonel William Roberts to separate his unit into three teams to achieve such a purpose. Roberts

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Price, Troy H. *Middleton a Biography*, 216.

<sup>169</sup> Ernest R. Dupuy, *St Vith, Lion in the Way: The 106<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in WWII* (Washington, DC: Washington Infantry Journal Press, 1949), 23.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.



commanded the 10th Armored Division Combat Command B (CCB) and arrived at the VIII Corps command post to reinforce the 101st Airborne's defense of Bastogne.<sup>171</sup> The corps commander instructed Roberts to split his armor and "move without delay in three teams to these positions and counter enemy threats" and to "hold these positions at all costs" at Wardin, Longvilly, and Noville, the avenues of approach into Bastogne's road network.<sup>172</sup> The official history of Bastogne indicated Roberts initially believed, "that the distribution of his force over so great an area would make it ineffective. Nevertheless, he made the mental observation that the corps commander must know the situation much better than he. Middleton's decision was the initial tactical steps which lead to the saving of Bastogne."<sup>173</sup> Roberts quickly assigned a field grade officer in charge of the three teams and assigned Task Force (TF) Desobry to Noville, Task Force (TF) Cherry to Longvilly and Task Force O'Hara to Wardin.<sup>174</sup> Despite his misgivings about the decision, Roberts trusted Middleton with whom he had served with in World War I and as his classmate at Leavenworth.<sup>175</sup> Middleton's decision not to employ his armor "decisively," as a concentrated force but rather in individual teams decidedly opposed a Leavenworth solution. However, the decision to disperse the armor along multiple routes proved invaluable to the defense of Bastogne. The teams' actions delayed the German advance and allowed the 101st to establish a defense on the outskirts of Bastogne rather than in its streets.<sup>176</sup> Team Desobry

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<sup>171</sup> VIII Corps Headquarters, *Situation Report December 20, 1944*, 208-3.8 Situation Reports July 1944-May 1945, Records Group 407, Stack Area 270, Row 53, Compartment 5, Shelf 5, Boxes 3491-3492, National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB).

<sup>172</sup> Walter Bedell Smith Collection: Collection of World War II Documents, 1941-1945, Box 41, *The Siege of Bastogne Part 2*, Eisenhower Library, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

<sup>174</sup> Walter Bedell Smith Collection: Collection of World War II Documents, 1941-1945, Box 41, *The Siege of Bastogne Part 2*, Eisenhower Library, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>175</sup> Price Troy H. *Middleton A Biography*, 230.

<sup>176</sup> Winton, *Corps Commanders of the Bulge Six American Generals and Victory in the Ardennes*, 162.

blocked the entire 2nd Panzer Division at Noville.<sup>177</sup> Middleton again employed armor in an unconventional manner to achieve his aim.

He also went against accepted norms in his decision not to establish a command relationship in the defense of Bastogne. As at St. Vith, Middleton again opted to modify the principles of command at Bastogne. Middleton initially declined to establish a commander between General McAuliffe of the 101st and Colonel Roberts of the 10th Armored Combat Command B (CCB). The corps commander, rather, appealed to his leaders to cooperate in the defense rather than designate a command relationship. Critical of Middleton's decision, Harold Winton observed that designating a commander was "clearly called for...Roberts's and McAuliffe's forces were, by Middleton's design inextricably linked."<sup>178</sup> Field regulations identified the necessity for doing so. Middleton learned and instructed that such relationships became "essential to success. All the troops assigned to the execution of a distinct task must be placed under one command."<sup>179</sup> Updated field regulations in 1941 prescribed, "All troops assigned to the execution of a distinct mission should be placed under one command, to function as a task force for the duration of the operation...in some situations, conditions dictate that attachments must be made to subordinate commands...in rapidly changing situations, or in the stages of any action, and, in general, when better support or coordination can be effected."<sup>180</sup> Yet Middleton chose not to and thereby employed a committee approach initially at the defense of Bastogne. He simply directed cooperation between the tanker and the infantryman.<sup>181</sup> However, Bastogne grew more isolated by the German advance on December 20, 1944. Middleton again

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<sup>177</sup> Price *Troy H. Middleton A Biography*, 269.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, 162-163.

<sup>179</sup> United States War Department, *Field Service Regulations United States Army 1923*, 4.

<sup>180</sup> United States War Department, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1941), 25.

<sup>181</sup> Walter Bedell Smith Collection: Collection of World War II Documents, 1941-1945, Box 41, *The Siege of Bastogne Part I*, Eisenhower Library, Kansas State Historical Society.

showed his adaptable nature to address the friction he created and to eliminate confusion in the defense between his two subordinate commanders. Middleton informed McAuliffe “the armor and all others within the circle were under his command.”<sup>182</sup> Accordingly, Roberts repositioned himself to McAuliffe’s headquarters to support the successful defense of Bastogne.

Middleton further established himself as among the most successful Army commanders at the Ardennes. Middleton’s command of the VIII Corps at the Ardennes exhibited the influences of his education, combat experience and most importantly, his willingness to adapt to the situation on the ground. Again, he accurately assessed his tactical situation and employed his forces decisively as he had at Sicily and Salerno. Now fully established in corps command, Middleton appeared more willing to make decisions that differed from the Leavenworth solution. His education and combat experience contributed to his judgment in how to think versus what to think in estimating his tactical situation. Eisenhower aptly assessed “he calmly retained control of his retiring forces and so conducted his operations as to impede and limit the extent of the German advance.”<sup>183</sup> His education, however, taught him how to think vice what to think in estimating his situation and developing his plan. Eventually, VIII Corps again found itself working for Patton’s Third Army on December 20, 1944 as Patton’s forces pushed north to relieve Bastogne.<sup>184</sup> General Patton’s initial ire with the VIII Corps commander expressed above changed considerably upon further appraisal of his friend’s decision. Patton hailed the decision to hold Bastogne and stated to Middleton, “I want to apologize to you for the statement I

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<sup>182</sup> Walter Bedell Smith Collection: Collection of World War II Documents, 1941-1945, Box 41, *The Siege of Bastogne Part 4*, Eisenhower Library, Kansas State Historical Society.

<sup>183</sup> Eisenhower to Marshall 11 April 1945, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Pre-Presidential File Cables Off (GCM/DDE Oct 02 1944-April 02, 1945 Box 133.

<sup>184</sup> VIII Corps Headquarters, *Situation Report December 21, 1944*, 208-3.8 Situation Reports July 1944-May 1945, Records Group 407, Stack Area 270, Row 53, Compartment 5, Shelf 5, Boxes 3491-3492, National Archives Building, Washington, DC (NAB).

made...That was a stroke of Genius.”<sup>185</sup> Middleton, however stated, perhaps rightly so that his decision was “no stroke of genius; it was just a natural thing to do.”<sup>186</sup> Ultimately, Bastogne became a small unit fight to hold the line at all costs. In command of the fight, Middleton's performance as a “methodical, unexcitable commander who...was almost scholarly in his approach” proved essential to his formation's success.<sup>187</sup>

## Conclusion

Lieutenant General Troy H. Middleton's ability to make rapid and logical decisions contributed significantly to the overall success of his commands. His time as both teacher and student at the Infantry School, Command and General Staff School (CGSS), and the Army War College allowed him to develop a cognitive process, capable of evaluating each tactical problem on its individual merit. Middleton's success in combat further validated his steadfast approach to command. An honor graduate of CGSS, Middleton's exposure to the military's educational curriculum solidified his understanding of the commander's role in the control of large unit formations.<sup>188</sup> Therefore, his military education, combat experience, and adaptive problem-solving methodology influenced his command at the division and corps level.

Extensive exposure to the school solution at Leavenworth affected Middleton's commands. The curriculum stressed “military organization, solution of problems, tactical functions at larger units, discussion of problems, and combat orders.”<sup>189</sup> The commander's estimate influenced him greatly as he developed and perfected his application of this tool for

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<sup>185</sup> Middleton, interview.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Interview with General Middleton's aide, John Cribbett as cited in John Hubbard Smylie, “United States Army VIII Corps under General Troy H. Middleton in the Ardennes Offensive December 16-December 31, 1944” (New Orleans: Tulane University, 1979), 57.

<sup>188</sup> Harry A. Smith, *Annual Report of the Commandant the General Service Schools Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 1923-1924* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1924), 11.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 16.

nearly 10 years. Middleton later applied this schema as his methodology for his decision-making while in command at Salerno, Sicily, Brittany, and Bastogne. The estimate drove his approach to understanding the capabilities of his formation in the adversity of combat. Middleton excelled in combat that allowed positioning himself to observe and support his subordinate commanders in near real time. The process allowed him to make rapid decisions and to direct actions that ensured the success of his formations on the beaches at Salerno and in the defense of Bastogne. Unable to employ such a method in the pursuit into Brittany, Middleton struggled to maintain control of his armored spearheads. However, his background still influenced his performance. Based on his estimate, he prudently exercised caution as he foresaw potential German flank attacks cutting his extended lines or destroying his armored spearhead. Nonetheless, Middleton's reliance on this mental process brought him success at all levels of command.

Middleton applied sound decision-making toward solving tactical problems. He attributed such success to Leavenworth's emphasis on reaching a sound decision under stress. Middleton's decision-making reflected the importance his military education placed in the commander reaching a sound decision. Middleton preferred to solve problems based on simple, forward-thinking solutions, and avoided unnecessary complications. He understood the value of simplicity in combat. He avoided complexity and communicated his plans as the field regulations directed--in simple, brief orders. Bastogne and Salerno presented occasions where his simple orders translated into mission success. Yet, Middleton demonstrated confidence in breaking with the Leavenworth solution to accomplish his mission. Middleton displayed his mental flexibility at each campaign, whether repositioning artillery and anti-tank units to hold the beachhead at Salerno or dividing his armor force to defend the approaches toward Bastogne. Consequently, his confidence grew with each new experience and success as he validated his ability to think through problems contextually rather than blindly apply principles of doctrine.

Lastly, Middleton's experience in combat affected his commands. He developed his beliefs in movement under fire and attacking at night out of his campaign experiences in World

War I. Indeed, Middleton appeared more comfortable with the static combat conditions he experienced in Sicily, Salerno, and Bastogne as opposed to the rapid pursuit in Brittany. He therefore commanded with ease at Sicily, Salerno, and Bastogne. Middleton commanded in a decentralized manner. Often he deferred decisions to his commanders or, at times failed to designate a chain of command as witnessed in Bastogne. He commanded through subordinates' initiative and encouraged teamwork in the solution of tactical problems. In so doing, Middleton's dependence and trust in his subordinates reflected his experiences in combat.

Middleton's educational development and his success in combat provide an example for the United States Army in its review of the current military educational process. Middleton graduated from the CGSS during an era that demanded academic and tactical excellence of student and instructor alike. Middleton, Patton, and their classmates from the class of 1924 became the last graduates to receive acknowledgment from the college for their academic and tactical prowess. Prior to this practice, stellar students became qualified instructors who set the example for future students. As historian Peter Schifferle concluded, "These were generally very reputable officers, frequently finishing as honor or distinguished graduates...Knowledge, teaching ability, experience, and personality were all considered...Arguably, the most proficient faculty existed in the 1920s, when many were personally selected by their own teachers to remain on as instructors themselves."<sup>190</sup> The Army recognized merit in placing emphasis on an officer's development and those selected to further his education. Middleton rather prophetically declared in a speech given at the Army War College in 1929, "If conducted properly, the Special Service Schools will send intelligent teachers to the next war...In order that the lessons learned in the past war may not be carried to the army of tomorrow, that the lives expended may not have been expended in vain...None but officers of unusual and proven ability should be entrusted with the

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<sup>190</sup> Schifferle, *America's School for War Fort Leavenworth Officer Education and Victory in World War II*, 88.

teaching of others at these schools.”<sup>191</sup> Those responsible for evaluating and reforming our military education system would serve the nation best to consider the benefit to the nation from Middleton’s instruction of nearly every future World War II corps commander.

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<sup>191</sup> Troy H. Middleton, “Infantry and Its Weapons,” (lecture delivered at The Army War College, Washington Barracks, DC, March 7, 1923).

## APPENDIX A: Chronology of General Middleton

Date	Event
12 October 1889	Born near Georgetown, Mississippi
1905-1909	Attends and graduates Mississippi State ROTC program
March 3, 1910	Enlists in United States Army, Fort Porter, Buffalo, New York
Mar 1912	Stationed at Fort Leavenworth; Earns the rank of Corporal
March 3, 1913	Commissioned as Second Lieutenant, Infantry; backdated to November 1912
Feb 1913	Assigned to Ft. Crockett, Galveston, Texas
1914	Serves with 7 <sup>th</sup> Infantry in Pancho Villa Campaign, Vera Cruz, Mexico
6 Jan 1915	Marries Jerusha Collins
15 August 1915	Leads civil support operations in Galveston, Texas post devastating hurricane
Mar 1916	Experiences combat as part of 7 <sup>th</sup> IN RGT with Pershing's expedition in Mexico
May 15, 1917	Promoted to Captain
April 28, 1918	Assumes command of the 1st Battalion, 47th Infantry Regiment
June 7, 1918	Promoted to Major; Led Battalion in Second Battle of the Marne
September 17, 1918	Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel; Leads Battalion in Meuse-Argonne Offensive
October 11, 1918	Assumes Command of the 39th Infantry Regiment to lead in combat
October 14, 1918	Promoted to Colonel; youngest Regimental Commander in the AEF
October 19, 1918	Assumes command of the 47th Infantry Regiment
Nov 1918-July 1919	Occupation Duty in France; Returns to attend Infantry School
Sept 1919-Jun 1921	Instructs at Infantry School, Fort Benning; Reassigned rank of Major
Sept 1921-Sept 1923	Attends at the Infantry Advanced Course; Serves on Infantry Board
1923-1924	Attends Command General Staff School; Graduates with Honor
1924-1928	Selected and serves as Instructor at the Command General Staff School



1928-1930	Attends Army War College
1930-1936 (1935)	Serves as Commandant of Cadets at LSU; (Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel)
1 Aug 1935	Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel
1936-1937	Attaché Duty in Philippines
August 1937	Retires at rank of LTC; Becomes Dean of Administration/Acting VP at LSU
20 Jan 1942	Volunteers for Active Duty; Assigned to Camp Wheeler at rank of LTC
1 Feb 1942	Promoted to Colonel
1 Apr 1942	Promoted to Brigadier General
June 1942	Promoted to Major General; Assumes command of 45 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Division
July-Nov 1943	Commands 45 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in invasion of Sicily and Italy
19 Nov 1943	Relieved of 45 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Division due to medical condition
4 Mar 1944	Assumes command of VIII Corps
Jun-Jul 1944	VIII Corps conduct of the Carentan Defense
Jul 1944	VIII Corps Operation COBRA/Breakout from Cotentin Peninsula
August 1944	VIII Corps Brittany Operations
Sept 1944	VIII Corps conduct of Siege of Brest, France
Dec 1944-Jan 1945	VIII Corps conduct defense/offensive in Ardennes/ The Battle of the Bulge
18 May 1945	Relinquishes command of VIII Corps
Aug 1945	Retires at the rank of LTG; Accepts position of comptroller at LSU
1950-1962	Serves as the President of LSU
11 Jan 1962	Receives honorary Doctorate of Law on Troy H. Middleton Day at LSU
1965-1970	Serves on Louisiana's bi-racial commission at request of Governor
9 Oct 1976	Dies at the age of 86 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

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